

United States Department of Agriculture
Employee Performance Plan and Appraisal Record (03/17/10)

Employee Name (Last, First, MI):	Position Title:	Series/Grade:
Agency:		Appraisal Period Dates (From/To):

Plan Development - Consultation and Certification

Signatures below certify that the rating official has developed the performance plan in consultation (direct communication) with the employee and has discussed the final plan with the employee. The discussion occurs at the beginning of the performance period or at any other time a performance plan is put in place. The rating official provides the employee with a copy of the plan.

Employee Signature:	Date:
Rating Official's Signature:	Date:
Reviewing Official's Signature:	Date:

Progress Reviews

Initials below certify the performance discussions occurring within the appraisal period. A minimum of one progress review is required.

Employee's Initials and Date:	Employee's Initials and Date:	Employee's Initials and Date:
Rating Official's Signature and Date:	Rating Official's Signature and Date:	Rating Official's Signature and Date:

Summary Rating (Check One)

Rating Official: *Check the summary rating level determined using the attached Element and Summary Rating Guide.*

☐ Outstanding ☐ Superior ☐ Fully Successful ☐ Marginal ☐ Unacceptable

Rating Official's Signature:	Date:
Reviewing Official's Signature:	Date:

I have an understanding of USDA and Agency ethics and conduct regulations. ☐ Yes ☐ No

This evaluation has been discussed with me and I have been given a copy. Signature does not constitute agreement or disagreement with the rating.

Employee's Signature:	Date:
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ELEMENT AND SUMMARY RATING GUIDE

Performance Element Rating Level Descriptions:				
Element ratings are to be based on observable performance and behaviors during the appraisal period. The following three level element rating scale is to be applied to the appraisal of each individual performance element at the end of the appraisal period.				
Exceeds Fully Successful. Performance in an element that, overall, exceeds the performance standards established for the meets fully successful level.				
Meets Fully Successful. Performance in an element that meets the standards established for the meets fully successful level. The employee is completing the work assigned to do at the expected level of performance.				
Does Not Meet Fully Successful. Performance in an element that falls below the standards established at the meets fully successful level. Documentation is required for each element evaluated as does not meet fully successful.				
Assignment of Element Ratings:				
Rate actual performance by entering 2 appraisal units for critical elements and 1 appraisal unit for non-critical elements in the boxes shown below. Tally the total appraisal units assigned for each column.				
Element1 (Critical)	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds Fully Successful	<input type="checkbox"/> Meets Fully Successful	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Fully Successful	
Element 2 (Critical)	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds Fully Successful	<input type="checkbox"/> Meets Fully Successful	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Fully Successful	
Element 3 (Noncritical)	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds Fully Successful	<input type="checkbox"/> Meets Fully Successful	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Fully Successful	
Element 4 (Critical for Supervisors)	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds Fully Successful	<input type="checkbox"/> Meets Fully Successful	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Fully Successful	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Element5 (Critical for Supervisors)	<input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds Fully Successful	<input type="checkbox"/> Meets Fully Successful	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Fully Successful	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Totals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Converting Element Ratings to Summary Rating:				
The summary rating is determined using the table below. The Mission Results element has the greatest emphasis for measurable results. After each element rating level has been determined, the supervisor will assign the summary rating by applying the following descriptions.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Outstanding All appraisal units are at "exceeds fully successful."	<input type="checkbox"/> Superior The number of appraisal units at "exceeds fully successful" is greater than the number of appraisal units at "meets fully successful" but none are rated "does not meet fully successful."	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully Successful The number of appraisal units at "meets fully successful" is equal to or is greater than the number of appraisal units at "exceeds fully successful." No critical element is rated "does not meet fully successful."	<input type="checkbox"/> Marginal More appraisal units are at "does not meet fully successful" than at "exceeds fully successful" and no critical element is rated "does not meet fully successful."	<input type="checkbox"/> Unacceptable One or more critical elements rated "does not meet fully successful."
Employee Summary Rating Levels:				
Outstanding: At the outstanding level, the employee's level of performance demonstrates outstanding contributions to the accomplishment of the Department, Agency, and/or Staff Office mission. At this level, the employee demonstrates a mastery of the required technical skills and a thorough understanding of the mission of the organization. The employee's efforts have a fundamental impact on the completion of program objectives. The employee produces an exceptional quality and quantity of work significantly ahead of established schedules or deadlines and with very little or no supervision. Performance for each element consistently exceeds the meets "Fully Successful" level.				
Superior: At the superior level of performance, the employee demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the objectives of the job and the procedures for accomplishing them. At this level, the employee produces a very high quality and quantity of work ahead of established schedules or deadlines and with minimal supervision.				
Fully Successful: At the fully successful level of performance, the employee demonstrates quality work in support of the Department, Agency, and/or Staff Office mission. At this level, the employee effectively applies technical skills and organizational knowledge to successfully complete work products. The employee successfully carries out regularly assigned duties as well as difficult special assignments. The employee produces the expected quality and quantity of work and meets deadlines or schedules for completion of work.				
Marginal: At the marginal level of performance, the employee demonstrates the need for improvement to achieve a rating of "fully successful." At this level, the employee's work products frequently need revision or adjustments, often requiring assistance from the supervisor and/or peers. Organizational goals and objectives are only met because of close supervision.				
Unacceptable: At the unacceptable level of performance, the employee does not meet the established performance standards for meets "fully successful" in one or more of the employee's critical elements. At this level, the employee's work products do not meet the minimum requirements expected and corrective action must be consistent with established procedures for unacceptable performance.				
Strategic Alignment				

All employee performance plans must align with the Department, Agency, and/or Staff Office goals and objectives. The performance plan must include at least one results-oriented performance element linked to the strategic goals and objectives of the organization such as Mission Results. Employee performance plans must include balanced, credible measures of performance for each performance element and identify the accomplishment of organizational objectives.

Departmental Strategic Goals and Management Initiatives

Strategic Goals:

1. Assist rural communities to create prosperity so they are self-sustaining, repopulating, and economically thriving.
2. Ensure our national forests and private working lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing our water resources.
3. Help America promote sustainable agricultural production and biotechnology exports as America works to increase food security.
4. Ensure that all of America's children have access to safe, nutritious, and balanced meals.

Management Initiatives:

Agency Strategic Goals and Management Initiatives

Element 1 - Mission Results (Mandatory/Critical). This element measures the achievement of program strategic goals and initiatives within assigned functional areas of responsibility and the employee’s contributions to the overall accomplishment of Departmental/Agency/Program strategic objectives.

Performance Requirements:

This is the one mandatory/critical performance element that measures results, specifically results contributing to the mission of the organization. Performance requirements in the element are expressed in terms of measurable results that directly link to and meet the organizational goals and objectives required of the employee during the appraisal period.

Instructions:

In the table below, describe the performance goals and measures applicable to the employee’s position. Identify performance measures to include specific accomplishments, outcomes, deliverables, and/or target dates. The employee will be accountable for accomplishing these measures during the appraisal period and will be expected to address completion of them in their annual accomplishment report. Accomplishing the results-focused performance measures described below constitute meeting the “*Fully Successful*” element level. There is no minimum number of performance requirements. Requirements are determined by the rating official in consultation (direct communication) with the employee.

Evaluation Method:

Performance will be assessed by the supervisor through (1) observation, (2) review of work product results, and (3) discussions with the employee, co-workers, customers, and/or supervisors.

Linkage (List the Goal and/or Strategy and Objective):	Performance Measures (List the specific accomplishments, outcomes, deliverables, and/or target dates):

Element Rating: Instructions: At the end of the rating period, compare the employee’s performance with the standards and assign an element rating. Refer to documentation and employee accomplishment report, as necessary.

☐ Exceeds Fully Successful

☐ Meets Fully Successful

☐ Does Not Meet Fully Successful

Element 2 – Communications/Customer Service and Civil Rights/Equal Employment Opportunity (Mandatory/Critical). This element measures an employee’s performance establishing and nurturing effective working relationships with all program staff, customers, and stakeholders both internal and external to USDA. It also measures the extent to which the employee performs his/her duties in a manner which consistently demonstrates commitment and adherence to civil rights/equal employment opportunity (CR/EEO) laws, regulations, and policy.

Performance Requirements

This is a mandatory/critical performance element. The performance requirements in this element are expressed in terms of narrative quantitative and qualitative expectations. Meeting the requirements below constitute meeting the “Fully Successful” element level. This element applies as written and may not be changed.

Evaluation Method:

Performance will be assessed by the supervisor through (1) observation, (2) review of work product results, and (3) discussion with the employee, co-workers, customers, and/or supervisors.

Written responses are concise, clear, factually accurate, logically ordered, and substantially free of errors. They are provided within designated or negotiated time frames with the supervisor, organization and/or customer.

Oral responses are clear, courteous and directly address issues and questions on relevant issues. Provides technical expertise on initiatives and actions required to establish and maintain effective delivery of assigned programs.

Maintains professional relationships and interactions with immediate staff, customers, and internal and external stakeholders to advance the staff’s interests and promote collaboration, two-way communication, teamwork, and results. Represents USDA effectively in the performance of duties.

Continually informs supervisor and appropriate Program management of sensitive or controversial emerging issues and offers well thought-out recommendations to prevent and/or respond to developing problems.

Seeks and actively listens to others’ questions, ideas, and concerns; shows respect for and considers diverse viewpoints, following up to ensure understanding.

Balances multiple and sometimes competing interests and adjusts priorities in response to changing demands. Analyzes customer feedback and identifies needs and concerns in making decisions, devising solutions, and resolving conflicts.

Actively supports and assists with Program’s cross functional team initiatives if applicable and/or when requested.

Civil Rights/Equal Employment Opportunity Standards for Nonsupervisory Positions:

Completes annual CR/EEO training as required within established timeframes.

Models appropriate behavior by treating customers, colleagues, employees, and other internal and external stakeholders with respect, courtesy, and sensitivity.

Effectively works with customers, peers and stakeholders.

Element Rating: Instructions: At the end of the rating period, compare the employee’s performance with the standards and assign an element rating. Refer to documentation and employee accomplishment report, as necessary.

- ☐ Exceeds Fully Successful
- ☐ Meets Fully Successful
- ☐ Does Not Meet Fully Successful

Element 3 – Innovation (Mandatory/Non-Critical): This element measures the employee’s ability to promote the development of new, innovative and resourceful ways to deliver better quality products and services to client agencies and customers.

Performance Requirements:

This is a mandatory/non-critical performance element. The performance requirements in this element are expressed in terms of narrative quantitative and qualitative expectations. Meeting the requirements below constitute meeting the “Fully Successful” element level. This element applies as written and may not be changed.

Evaluation Method:

Performance will be assessed by the supervisor through (1) observation, (2) review of work product results, and (3) discussion with the employee, co-workers, customers, and/or supervisors.

Champions change and transition in Program area. Seeks alternative solutions and creative approaches to problem solving. Research on best practices (benchmarking) usually reflects thorough analysis and recommendations. Is resourceful in developing approaches with limited means or funds.

Takes the lead in team situations, where appropriate, to incorporate customer needs and requirements in the effective development of new programs, products and services.

Participates in collaborative partnerships, workgroups, and teams, as needed, “where out of the box” thinking is required. Contributes in a competent and professional manner.

Works with customer organizations to develop ways to improve the services the Program area provides.

Special projects are regularly completed on time in a competent, accurate, and thorough manner. Completed projects comply with regulations, procedures and established processes and reflect research and collaboration with others as required.

Keeps abreast of new developments that may affect assigned functional area.

Shares with co-workers relevant material that may have not been seen by others.

As requested, reviews, on a timely basis and provides professional comments on draft regulations, policies, and procedures.

Element Rating: Instructions: At the end of the rating period, compare the employee’s performance with the standards and assign an element rating. Refer to documentation and employee accomplishment report, as necessary.

- ☐ Exceeds Fully Successful
- ☐ Meets Fully Successful
- ☐ Does Not Meet Fully Successful

Element 4 – Supervision and Human Resources Management (Mandatory/Critical and required for those employees officially designated as supervisors in their position description). This element measures an employee’s leadership and management of human resources to accomplish assigned responsibilities and to achieve Program and Agency goals.

Performance Requirements:

This is a mandatory/critical performance element. The performance requirements in this element are expressed in terms of narrative quantitative and qualitative expectations. Meeting the requirements below constitute meeting the “*Fully Successful*” element level. This element applies as written and may not be changed.

Evaluation Method:

Performance will be assessed by the supervisor through (1) observation, (2) review of work product results, and (3) discussion with the employee, co-workers, customers, and/or supervisors.

Element 4 – Supervision and Human Resources Management (Mandatory/Critical and required for those employees officially designated as supervisors in their position description). This element measures an employee’s leadership and management of human resources to accomplish assigned responsibilities and to achieve Departmental, DM, and OHRM goals.

Performance Requirements:

This is a mandatory/critical OHRM performance element. The performance requirements in this element are expressed in terms of narrative quantitative and qualitative expectations. Meeting the requirements below constitute meeting the “*Fully Successful*” element level. This element applies as written and may not be changed.

Evaluation Method:

Performance will be assessed by the supervisor through (1) observation, (2) review of work product results, and (3) discussion with the employee, co-workers, customers, and/or supervisors.

Measures for Workforce Recruitment, Hiring, Retention, and Succession Planning

Recruitment and Hiring – (applies to supervisors with hiring authority)

Recruits and selects new employees based on organizational goals, budget considerations, and staffing needs. When filling a position, the supervisor engages and collaborates with HR to ensure skills required for the job are identified, posting of the job vacancy is accurate, and assists in identifying contacts for diverse locations or organizations for recruiting purposes. Participates as needed with HR in the proper screening of applications, and appropriate categorization of applicants based on qualifications.

Utilizes flexible hiring authorities when filling a vacancy (e.g., targeted disabilities, student employment, direct hire, appointing veterans, etc.) to ensure diversity in recruitment and hiring.

Retention and Succession Planning (applies to all supervisors)

Successfully transitions new hires into the position by promptly providing an orientation into the workforce and establishing performance elements and standards. Supervisor provides ongoing feedback and coaching, and makes appropriate use of the probationary period to assess the new hire’s ability to perform in the position.

Implements retention strategies that focus on key internal processes (e.g., work environment, employee orientation, executing Individual Development Plans for all employees--subject to bargaining obligations, coaching, development, and mentoring, etc.) that promotes employee growth, supports the health of the workforce and drive the future success of the organization’s people and infrastructure.

Assesses current workforce plans to ensure they are up-to-date in order to meet Program/Agency goals and objectives. Works with senior management officials and HR to comply with the workforce planning process as described in the Department’s position management policy.

Measures for Performance Management

(Applies to all supervisors with performance management responsibilities)

The supervisor establishes subordinate employee performance plans within established timeframes and that align with Agency and Departmental goals and objectives. Communicates to employees how their work supports the Agency mission and strategic plan/initiatives. Employee performance plans contain clear, results-focused measures and the supervisor provides accurate and timely feedback to determine progress and success in meeting expectations:

- The supervisor completes performance plans, progress reviews, and appraisals of subordinate employees by the due dates established by the Department or Agency. Performance plans for each employee must include at least one critical element that is traceable to the agency's goals and objectives (e.g., Mission Results critical performance element).
- Provides ongoing feedback and coaching as demonstrated through performance feedback sessions as evidenced by 100% of employees receiving at least one feedback session at the midpoint of the rating period.
- Ensures appropriate action is taken to address performance problems in a manner that supports organizational goals and objectives.
- Ensures subordinate managers and supervisors adhere to the Agency performance management policy with regard to performance appraisal and employee recognition.

Performance and employee feedback data is used as an indicator of compliance and general satisfaction or needed improvement with regard to the planning, developing, monitoring, rating and rewarding of performance.

Organizational goals, objectives, priorities, work assignments, and deadlines are clearly communicated to employees. Resources and priorities are adjusted to meet workload demands. Human Resources initiatives and strategies are implemented in accordance with Departmental and Agency policy. Employees are encouraged to participate in employee surveys to assist the organization in measuring organizational health, morale, and satisfaction.

Ensures workforce has the time and tools needed to successfully complete required trainings, employee orientation, and security briefings by assigned due dates and/or in accordance with Department/OHRM policy.

Maintains a positive organizational environment that promotes the acceptance of diversity, inclusion, innovation, initiative, open and honest communication, and teamwork among employees and peers. Ensures employees have the tools and training to do their jobs.

Creates and sustains a positive workplace that inspires others to work together cooperatively and effectively to support the organization's mission and goals; openly addresses conflict, disagreement, and differences in perspective; and produces amicable and effective resolutions. Exhibits a leadership style that demonstrates integrity, sound judgment, flexibility and high ethical standards of public service

Employee Perspective: Seeks employee feedback to identify needs and expectations and considers employee perspective when making decisions affecting workforce or programs.

Customer Perspective: Ensures a high degree of responsiveness to organizational leadership, the public, and internal and external customers. Continuously reviews and monitors organizational performance to achieve agency mission results and considers the customer's point of view. Consults and collaborates and build partnerships with agencies and other stakeholders, and takes decisive actions in accordance with law, regulation, and Department policy. Continuously seeks to improve business processes, sharing those efforts with other units to improve overall Department performance. Systematically listens to customers and gathers their feedback, actively seeking to identify their needs and expectations, and effectively communicating those needs and expectations to employees. Ensures employees are prompt, professional, fair and responsible to the circumstances of individual customers to the extent permitted by law and regulation.

Element Rating: Instructions: At the end of the rating period, compare the employee's performance with the standards and assign an element rating. Refer to documentation and employee accomplishment report, as necessary.

- ☐ Exceeds Fully Successful
- ☐ Meets Fully Successful
- ☐ Does Not Meet Fully Successful

Element 5 – Civil Rights (Mandatory/Critical and required for those employees officially designated as supervisors in their position description). This element measures an employee’s contributions to civil rights through the development, implementation, and advancement of civil rights strategic goals; enforcement of civil rights laws, rules, regulations; and in holding subordinate supervisors accountable for achieving measureable civil rights goals and objectives in all employment, program delivery, and other administrative activity.

Performance Requirements:

This is a mandatory/critical performance element. The performance requirements in this element are expressed in terms of narrative quantitative and qualitative expectations. Meeting the requirements below constitute meeting the “*Fully Successful*” element level. This element applies as written and may not be changed.

Evaluation Method:

Performance will be assessed by the supervisor through (1) observation, (2) review of work product results, and (3) discussion with the employee, co-workers, customers, and/or supervisors.

Goals and objectives from the Agency’s Strategic Plan and Program’s priorities related to accountability, program delivery, outreach, workforce diversity, employment practices, resources and structure, performance, administrative activities, communications and reporting are met.

Demonstrates an understanding of and commitment to equal employment opportunity and ensures fair and equitable program delivery.

Ensures subordinate supervisors exercise effective managerial, communication and interpersonal skills to supervise and develop a diverse workforce.

The importance of Civil Rights and Equal Employment is communicated to unit employees at least once during the rating cycle, and other Civil Rights and Equal Employment policies and topics are routinely discussed at staff meetings.

Completes and ensures subordinate employees have the time and tools needed to complete annual civil rights training within identified timeframes and agency and departmental requirements.

Makes good faith efforts to resolve employment complaints and workforce disputes at all times, particularly early in the process, by offering alternative dispute resolution, training, and alternative assignments; by timely response to requests for information from EEO counselors, mediators, investigators, and adjudicators; and by prompt implementation of settlement agreements.

Element Rating: Instructions: At the end of the rating period, compare the employee’s performance with the standards and assign an element rating. Refer to documentation and employee accomplishment report, as necessary.

- ☐ Exceeds Fully Successful
- ☐ Meets Fully Successful
- ☐ Does Not Meet Fully Successful